
A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

The LORD MAYOR,

THE

Aldermen and Governors

Of the several HOSPITALS of the City
of L O N D O N,

At the Parish Church of St. *Bridget*, on Wed-
nesday in *Easter-Week*, April 1. 1730.

By WILLIAM BERRIMAN, D. D.

Rector of St. *Andrew's Undershaft*, and Fellow
of *Eton College*.

L O N D O N :

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B R O C A S, Mayor.

Martis 7^o die April. 1730. Annoq; Reg. Nostr.
Georgii secundi Magnæ Britanniaë &c. tertio.

I*T is ordered, That the Thanks of this Court
be given to the Reverend Dr. Berriman,
for his Sermon preach'd before this Court, and
the Governors of the several Hospitals of this
City, at the Parish Church of St. Bridget, on
Wednesday in Easter Week last; and that he be
desired to print the same.*

JACKSON.



ECCLES. xi. 2.

Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

THE Preacher having gone thro' the former part of his book, in exposing the vanity of those methods, which men are used to pursue, for the procurement of present ease and lasting felicity ; he comes at length to prescribe such directions and rules of life, as may effectually secure the point, which is labour'd for in vain by the foregoing methods, such as may at present afford matter of the justest consolation, and lead us in the end to enjoy the most substantial happiness. Among these, as he concluded the foregoing chapter with hinting at our duty towards those of a superior station, so he begins this before us with suggesting what we owe to inferiors, or such as are below us. Of this kind

plainly is that duty of *Almsgiving*, which is figuratively express'd in the first verse of this chapter, under the metaphor of *casting bread upon the waters*, and more plainly in the words of the text, *Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*

From whence I would take occasion

I. To speak in general of that duty of *almsgiving*, which is here expressed by *giving a portion*.

II. To point out our obligation to the frequent exercise of this duty; *Give a portion to seven, and also to eight.* And then

III. To urge it more particularly from that motive which is suggested in the text; *for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*

I. First therefore I begin to speak in general of that duty of *almsgiving*, which is here express'd by *giving a portion*. For so it is reasonably understood

stood as explanatory of the verse preceding, rather than in that sense which the *Chaldee* paraphrase suggests of committing seed to the earth in the *seventh* and the *eighth* month.

It appears to have been customary with the ancient *Jews*, for the richer people to be mindful of the poor on the more solemn festivals; and as they were required by the law to leave them the *gleanings of their harvest* both in *fields and vineyards* , and the spontaneous growth of the *Sabbatic year* ^a, so they used to admit them to some participation of their banquets, that whilst they ^b *ate the fat, and drank the sweet* themselves, they might give proof at the same time of their bounteous disposition, by *sending portions unto them for whom nothing was prepared* . To this practice, 'tis probable, the Preacher might allude, when in the text he prescribed the *giving of a portion* , namely a *portion* of that *bread*

^a Exod. xxiii. 11. Levit. xix. 9, 10. xxiii. 22.

^b Neh. viii. 10. Esth. ix. 22.

or food which he had mention'd in the verse before. And from hence perhaps arose the custom mention'd in the ^a *Jewish* Pandects, of appointing certain officers for the collection and distribution of this sort of provision, as well as others for the pecuniary alms and contributions of the people. But since they are both founded in the same general reason and law of Charity, I shall take leave to handle them together, and briefly state the obligation of that grand precept and rule of our religion, which requires us to have regard to the complaints of the poor, and provide for their relief and sustenance.

The same Providence, which for wise ends and purposes has placed some in a low and indigent condition, has likewise furnished others with plenty and abilities to help them, that whilst the straitness of their circumstances is meant for the trial of their faith and virtue, it may however be so well proportion'd and suited to their

^a Maim. in Mattanoth. Anim, five *de donis pauperum*, c. 9. §. 2.

strength,

strength, that no *temptation* may be said to *overtake them but what is common to man*^a, or fit for the frailty of human nature to sustain and undergo. To incline those who are rich to be thus communicative of the goods which they enjoy, there is implanted a certain sympathy within us, whereby we feel (as it were) in ourselves the miseries which we behold in others, and are sensibly concern'd for the grievances which they endure. To relieve them therefore is to ease ourselves, and by supplying those wants which are the ground of their misfortunes, we shall compose that disorder of our own breasts which the sight of them occasion'd, and perceive a satisfaction rising in its stead, superior (I am bold to appeal to all that have made trial of it) far superior to whatever could be found from any other application of our substance to the purposes of pride or avarice. So agreeable is this procedure to the reasonable nature of man, that with

^a 1 Cor. x. 13.

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a peculiar emphasis we often term it *humanity* itself; and they who never exercise such acts of brotherly affection, are judged to have degenerated from the tenderness of men to the savageness of beasts.

What is thus evidently founded in principles of reason, and ranked among the laws of nature, is yet more clearly proposed and enforced under the shining light of revelation. The duties of helping the afflicted, and ministering to their necessities, are so strongly bound upon us by the rules of Christianity, and so manifestly deduced from the more general precepts of love and universal benevolence, that the neglect of observing them cannot possibly lay claim to the excuse of ignorance, but must bear the blame of wilfulness and obduration.

Nay, even before the delivery of Gospel precepts, what care was there taken of the poor, even by the precepts of the law? What encouragement was given to it by the prophets
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of that dispensation ? And how was it reckon'd for a genuine token and expression of repentance, that men should ^a *break off* their *sins by righteousness*, and their *iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor* ?

^b The *Jews* have carried this so high as to determine that whoever shall refresh himself, after a day of fasting and humiliation, either with eating or with sleep, before he has distributed his alms to the poor, is involv'd in equal guilt with him that is a murderer. Hereby indeed they shew their zeal rather than their judgment, since the observation of *affirmative* precepts may be forborn or suspended upon some occasions, but nothing can excuse the violation of the *negative*. They go on to observe, that we are more strictly obliged to *Almsgiving*, ^c than to any other *affirmative* precept whatsoever, that it is call'd emphatically by the name of *righteous-*

^a Dan. iv. 27.

^b Maimon. ut supr. §. 4.

^c Maimon.

ut supr. cap. 10. §. 1, &c.

ness, required to be done with readiness and satisfaction, enforced with the promises of great reward, and threatning of heavy punishment to the neglect of it.

How just a reproach may their observations be to us, if we should be defective in these particulars, who are more fully and explicitly instructed, ^a how *the love of our neighbour* is the *fulfilling of the law*, that royal law of Christian obedience, founded in the love of God, and actuated by a sincere, unfeigned regard to his commands? How our *alms* should be dispens'd with a liberal hand, and with a chearful^b heart, *not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a chearful giver*? How the good offices done by us in this manner are accepted by our Lord as done unto himself^c, who represents this as the grand article of his enquiry at the day of judgment?

^a Rom. xiii. 8. Gal. v. 14. Jam. ii. 8. ^b 2 Cor. ix. 7.
^c Matt. xxv. 34.

Not that this, or any other work of ours, may be thought to have such dignity or merit in it, as to deserve a reward of everlasting happiness! For what claim can we have upon God, beyond what his own free bounty is pleased to give us, even tho' we were able to do all that is commanded? And how much less, when our actions are so visibly imperfect, and fall short of the rule of our obedience? But where the outward act proceeds from an inward principle of faith, and sense of duty, it is there an instance of that real and religious obedience, which, however it be imperfect in itself, shall yet be accepted by our merciful Creator, for the sake of his merits who has all sufficiency, and is therefore worthy of all acceptance and regard.

So well might *Solomon* advise^a to cast our *bread upon the waters*, where however it may seem to perish and be lost at present, yet we shall find it after

^a Eccles. xi. 1.

many days, it will return again with interest, if not in an addition to the comforts and conveniences of this life, yet in that future consolation which infinitely exceeds them, in that ^a *fulness of joy* which is at God's *right-hand*, and that *pleasure* which endures for evermore.

Mean while it ought to be remember'd, the wise Author of our text prescribes not the giving away the whole of our substance, but a *portion* only. I will not deny but some possible cases may be put, in which one may be obliged to follow the advice to the young man in the Gospel, ^b *to go, sell all that he had, and give give to the poor, in order to have treasure in heaven.* The church may possibly be reduc'd to such circumstances as it was in at the beginning of Christianity, when 'twas thought adviseable at least, if not strictly necessary for the brethren at *Jerusalem*, that no one should call any thing ^c *his*

^a Psal. xvi. 11.

^b Matt. xix. 21.

^c Acts iv. 32.

own, but they should all throw their substance into one common stock, and take from thence in proportion to their several occasions. But ordinarily there is no need for this rigorous expedient; the exigences of the indigent might be tolerably reliev'd, if those of better fortunes would but spare a moderate proportion from their own superfluities for their supply. But this will better appear by our proceeding to the

II. Second thing propos'd from the text, namely to point out our obligation to the frequent exercise of this duty. *Give a portion to seven and also to eight.*

There are two rules prescribed by the Apostle for the measure of our charity; that *every man should give as God hath prosper'd him,*^a and ^b *according as he purposeth in his heart.* The first of these implies that it should

^a 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

^b 2 Cor. ix. 7.

bear some proportion to our abilities; the other, that it be so much, and no more than we are ready to impart with a chearful and willing mind. The former is the standard by which the latter should be regulated; for if we find ourselves unwilling to part with so much as is suitable to our abilities, we are then plainly defective in our dispositions to this duty, and ought without question to correct this enormity of our actions.

Now there are various circumstances fit to be consider'd, in order to determine how far our abilities may reach. Together with the plenty of our present income, we must consider the likelihood of its continuance, the number of our dependents, the quality or station of life in which they are to be maintain'd, and their capacity or incapacity to make provision for themselves. But after all, it must in great measure be left to every man to judge for himself, how much he is in circumstance to spare for the relief and assistance

assistance of the indigent. Only it should be charged upon his conscience, as his bounden duty, so to consider his own real occasions, as not to withhold the just portion of the poor, nor under the pretence of providing for himself and his family, to gratify a vain ambition, pride or avarice.

^a The *Jews* indeed prescribe the tenth part of a man's substance to be given to the poor, as a moderate degree of charity, which whosoever falls short of, incurs the blame of covetousness, or having his ^b eye (in the language of the scripture) *evil against his poor brother*. At the same time they recommend the giving of a *fifth*, as a more commendable instance of obedience. How far does this rule of *Jewish* righteousness exceed the usual practice of those who profess themselves disciples of a more perfect dispensation! And yet even this was some-

^a Maimon. Mattanoth Anim. c. 7. §. 5.

^b Deut. xv. 9.

times greatly exceeded, as we see by the example of *Zaccheus*, who ^a gave no less than *half* his *goods to the poor*, besides a *fourfold* restitution for any accidental injuries.

But to say the truth, an exact proportion which should oblige all men equally at all times, is neither reasonable to be asked, nor possible to be prescribed. For as our private circumstances may sometimes admit of parting with either more or less, so the circumstances of the publick may be such, as may oblige us even to straiten and abridge our usual expences, in order to dispense our boons with a more bounteous hand. When either the number of the indigent is greater, or their wants more pressing and deplorable, we cannot but esteem it our duty to part with more, than when the poor are not in number so many, or their wants are more easily supplied. So likewise when the gene-

^a Luke xix. 8.

ality of those who are able, are yet backward to contribute their share to this purpose, the good Christian will certainly think himself obliged to part with more for the supply of this deficiency, and deny himself some part of what might be convenient, rather than see his brethren destitute of that which is absolutely necessary.

But tho' for these reasons there is no rule to be prescribed, which shall be universal and unalterable, yet in the general I cannot but imagine it might be of great use, if men would be persuaded so to consider their own occasions and the necessities of other people, as to judge what proportion of their income might be commonly spared for pious and charitable purposes. I mention *pious* as well as *charitable* purposes, because whatever is dedicated to the honour of God, and the more immediate service of religion, will fitly be referr'd to this article of our expence, and consider'd as a stated tribute paid to him, of

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whose

whose grant and donation we hold all that we enjoy.

By them that have a constant and clear income, this matter might be managed with little difficulty ; and as for them whose gain depends on trade or other contingencies, as they have usually one time in the year for balancing and adjusting their accounts, they might make that also the time for adjusting the proportion of their charity. Then they, whose increase is greater, and their occasions less, may be reasonably expected to give not only more in value, but also more in proportion : Since he who gives four pounds out of twenty has yet a good deal more remaining than he who gives but one pound out of ten. This would be to *lay by in store^a*, as God has prosper'd

^a 1 Cor. xvi. 2. The original is *παρ' ἑαυτῶν τιθεῖτω θησαυρίζων*. So that here seem to be two things implied in this advice : (1.) That the Christians should separate a certain part of their gains for charity continually as they came in : And (2.) That this should once a week be carried to the publick *treasury*, which is argued not only from the word *θησαυρίζων*, but also from the time appointed for treasuring it up, *viz. on the first day of the week*, the solemn day of publick assembly : And farther from the reason subjoin'd, — *that there be no gatherings when I come*

prosper'd us; and whatever proportion we shall fix upon in this manner, whether a fifth, a tenth, or but a twentieth part of our increase, we shall by this means have a kind of poor's stock always by us, which we shall not consider as our own, and then we shall readily and chearfully apply it, as occasion offers, to the uses for which it is appropriate.

But perhaps the precept of the text might better be referr'd to the choice of *fit objects* for the exercise of charity, many in their number, and deserving in their kind, than to the largeness of the sum which it is proper to disburse on such occasions. Give *a portion to seven and also to eight*. It seems to have been usual to express variety by these numbers. Accordingly we find the same in the Prophet

come—which implies, that all their contributions were to be brought into one stock beforehand, since otherwise a mere private designation would not have superseded the need of a collection at the Apostle's coming. [See *Locke's paraphrase and note on the place.*] But if such a publick treasury be now impracticable, yet at least the observing a certain proportion may be still recommended, whoever be the Almoner entrusted to dispose of it.

Micah^a, — *When the Assyrian shall come into our land — then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.* So that the wise man's advice may admit this easy paraphrase. “ Content not yourselves
 “ with bestowing your benevolence
 “ upon one or two objects, however
 “ worthy in themselves, or how large
 “ soever your contributions to them;
 “ but endeavour in such manner to
 “ portion out your charity, that it may
 “ be as diffusive as is possible; and
 “ since the Providence of God pre-
 “ sents you with frequent occasions
 “ for the exercise of it, be sure to
 “ lay hold on many, if you cannot
 “ on all; and let those especially, where
 “ the benefit may be of most exten-
 “ sive influence, be sure to have your
 “ chiefest regard.” This is, in the *Psalmist's* phrase, ^b *to disperse abroad by giving to the poor*; it is to scatter our benevolence, not carelessly, but

^a Micah v. 5.^b Psal. cxii.

with discretion, that it may reach to many of the present age, and down to future generations.

^aThe *Jews* in their writings mention *eight* degrees of charity, with regard to the method or manner of bestowing it: And our blessed Saviour, in his representation of the last judgment, has mention'd *six*, with regard to the different necessities of those on whom it is bestow'd. ^b*I was an hungred* (says he) *and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.* But as this is not proposed for a perfect induction, but only a brief specification of the various instances of want: So neither may we understand the preacher in the text to limit us precisely to *seven* or *eight* instances, but only to instruct us, that since the

^a Maimon. ut supra, cap. 10. §. 7, &c. ^b Matt. xxv. 35.

calls of the indigent are loud and numerous, our answers to them should bear some proportion, and help to mitigate the grief of numbers in distress.

How great their numbers, and how grievous their necessities, he will scarce be at a loss to know, who is used to converse in the world, where every day must furnish him with fresh examples of the misery to which his fellow creatures are expos'd.

But besides the casual decay of many families, and those daily opportunities of doing good, which every man may find within the compass of his own knowledge: The design of our present meeting requires me to point out those greater and more pressing exigences, which deserve to be matter of a publick concern, and are accordingly in some measure provided for by several charitable foundations in this city, yet not in such measure but that there is still room more than enough, to receive the pious benefactions of those who have a just compassion

compassion for the miseries of other people.

They who are disabled, by diseases and bodily infirmity, from providing the common necessities of life for themselves and their families, are still much less able to support that expence which is requisite in lingring sicknesses, to provide them with proper medicines, attendance and advice. To reach out a sufficient help for such disasters seems to exceed the compass of private management. And therefore without some publick care taken for the relief of the poor in such circumstances, they must many of them be left to perish in the most wretched manner under these misfortunes. Such care has been charitably endeavour'd by the erection of hospitals, about this city, for the reception of sick and lame persons, and supplying them with proper helps for their recovery. But because the carrying on of so expensive a design requires a perpetual fund of benevolence ; it is particularly

ticularly expected of them that enjoy health and ability of body, and have been blest'd in the use of them with great improvement of their substance, that they should think themselves obliged, as they hope for mercy at the great tribunal, to render some tribute for the blessings they enjoy, and spare a decent proportion from their own superfluities, to relieve and mitigate this hard necessity of other people.

And as these poor people, who labour under the immediate pressure of bodily distempers, have a title to be first consider'd ; so neither are they in the next place to be over-look'd, who have a competent measure of health and strength, but abuse it to the purposes of idleness and vice. These are not indeed to be supplied with money, to support them in their vicious extravagance ; but it is fit that houses of correction be provided for them, where by stripes and hard labour they may themselves be brought to a better sense of their duty, and
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the publick may be better secur'd against the mischiefs of vagrancy and most abandon'd licentiousness.

Nor ought we to forget what compassion there is due to those who are lost to all the powers of reason, and the distinguishing faculties of men ; whom either the horrors of melancholy have terrified with dismal apprehensions, or the ravings of frenzy have transported into rage and fury. Tho' the ground of both be vain and imaginary, and neither of 'em founded in the reason of things, yet the effect it has in their imagination is the same as if it were real and substantial, so that they are alike disqualified for providing for themselves, or regarding the necessities of life. Whether they fancy themselves to be oppressed under the utmost extremity, or on the other hand possessed of all grandeur and authority : 'Tis hard to say in which case they are most to be pitied, or more truly worthy of our Christian compassion. We must be lost to all

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sense

sense of humanity, if we are not touch'd with a view of their misfortunes, and willing to encourage the methods here propos'd for their relief and recovery. And if it be thought that they, whose case is judg'd incurable, ought not to be detain'd to the exclusion of such as might receive greater benefit, yet the wretchedness of their condition speaks aloud for itself, and pleads for your concurrence in that generous design, which is now on foot, to make a farther provision for their help and maintenance, tho' their recovery be desperate.

To all these various objects of our care and concern, we must be sure to add the fatherless and widow, those whom, as having none on earth immediately oblig'd to help and succour them, God has promised to take into his safe protection; and how? but by stirring up the hearts of those whom he has placed in better circumstances, to assist them either with their alms or their advice, and so supply the defect.

fect of an husband to the one, and a father to the other. The education in particular of helpless youth, whether destitute of parents, or born of such as cannot sustain the burden of it, (and of both sorts there is care taken by the charitable foundations of this city:) I say such education is a benefit of vast extent, and whilst it provides at once both for their souls and bodies, by instructing them in principles of true religion, and putting them in some method of honest livelihood, it renders them at the same time useful to the public, and transmits the blessed influence to future generations.

What progress has been made in all these instances of charity, and what need there is of a continual contribution to the same purposes, you will be able to judge from that report which is next in order to be laid before you.

[Here the report of the several Hospitals was read.]

So great then and so various being the occasions which demand our help, it cannot be improper, in the

III. Third and last place, to urge this duty more particularly from that motive which is suggested in the text;
For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

How opposite herein is the reasoning of Scripture to the profane and carnal reasonings of worldly men! Ask but the fordid miser, for what end he heaps up such immense treasures, without either venturing to enjoy them himself, or imparting them to help the necessities of others? 'Tis odds but he will tell you, 'tis because he *knoweth not what evil shall be upon the earth*; he cannot foresee what accidents may happen, nor to what straits and misfortunes he may one day be reduced. He only lays up against the evil day, and is loth to part with that, which his own pressing occasions may at some time or other demand, however at present

sent unforeseen or unexpected. And yet this is the very reason given by the wise man to move us to be liberal, and frequently to exercise ourselves in acts of bounty and beneficence. *For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.* “Thou canst not be
 “apprised what calamities are now
 “like to ensue, which might be possibly prevented by so charitable a
 “behaviour, nor what support or defence it may administer under those
 “misfortunes which shall actually surround thee.” This way of arguing will appear to be well-grounded and just, if we consider either the care of Providence in general, or the usual course and order of things.

Who can have better reason to depend upon the favour and provision of our heavenly Father, thro’ the merits of Christ, than he who is obsequious to his commands, and by parting with the enjoyments of this life, and putting them to such uses as his wisdom directs, has given proof that
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he ^a trusts not in uncertain riches but in the living God? ^b He need not be afraid of any evil tidings, whilst his heart is thus fixed, trusting in the Lord; for ^c he shall give his Angels charge over him, to keep him, so that he should have nothing to fear from ten thousands of the people, that should set themselves against him round about^d. He is not only better prepar'd to sustain any temporal losses that may happen to him, by his prospect of a better and a more enduring substance^e, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth^f: But he has really much juster grounds than other men, to hope he may escape them; since he has approved himself a faithful steward, and honour'd God with his substance^g, by laying it out agreeably to his direction. They who transfer their trust from God to Mammon, can have no ground

^a 1 Tim. vi. 17.^b Psal. cxii. 7.^c Ibid. xci.

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^d Ibid. iii. 6.^e Heb. x. 34.^f Luke

xii. 33.

^g Prov. iii. 9.

to complain, if, instead of the blessing and protection of our heavenly Father, they be left to the vain help of the idol they set up to themselves ; and whilst, from an immoderate desire of encreasing their wealth, they detain the portion of the poor, they will often find it as a canker to waste and eat out the rest, and so defeat the end which they chiefly aim to pursue. But the charitable man is always represented as the special care and favourite of Providence ; and the order of things is so wisely concerted and disposed, as to provide him an easier retreat and refuge under all adversities.

It may be sometimes fit, for the trial and manifestation of his virtue, to afflict him with those outward losses and calamities, which he was once so forward to pity and relieve in others. But then his title to assistance is much better secured ; and as ^a *the blessing of him that was ready to perish came up-*

^a Job. xxix. 13,

on him in the time of his prosperity ; so the remembrance of his good offices can hardly fail to procure him such friends in the day of his distress, as may render it supportable at least, if not entirely rescue and release him from it. Even in those calamities, which become common and national, he will be much safer from the reputation of his bounty, than the niggard can be supposed from all that wealth he may have heap'd together by pinching from himself, or denying to the poor.

Imagine those disorders, which may happen in a nation, either from the invasion of foreign force, or from the tumult of domestic insurrections: And who is most exposed to the plunder and rapine of ungovernable multitudes ; he who has been known to disperse his substance with a generous hand, or he whose griping and extortion has only serv'd to render him a richer booty, that he may fall a prey to avarice insatiate as his own ?

Or

Or suppose a land oppressed with famine and scarcity of bread : And who has justest cause to apprehend danger from the murmurs and despair of the poor ; he who has been used to relieve them suitably to his abilities ; or he who has been deaf to all their piteous cries and complaints, and hoarded up that treasure superfluous to himself, whereby they ought to have been satisfy'd with bread ?

Lastly, Put the case of pestilence or a contagious sickness, and nothing will more contribute to its propagation, than that hunger and neglect to which the poor are exposed when destitute of the common comforts and conveniences of life. So that he, whose bounteous disposition, by relieving their necessities, has help'd to remove poverty out of his own neighbourhood, has used the most effectual means in nature, to keep off the infection from himself, that ^a no such

^a Psal. xci. 10.

evil may happen unto him, neither any plague come nigh his dwelling.

And now what remains, but to examine our own consciences, whether we have been mindful, as we ought, of our brethren in distress, and observ'd the counsel of the wise man, in providing against future evils by present acts of bounty and beneficence? Or whether we have not rather indulged our selves in sordid, avaritious pursuits, as if *gain* had been the only ^a *godliness*, and all other business must give place to the heaping up of treasures upon earth? Surely in vain shall we profess to worship God, whilst our hearts are thus running after covetousness. Most highly therefore it concerns us to take care that we correct this most deplorable enormity. Those among us, who have much, let them give of their abundance, and remember that it is their duty, who are ^b *rich* in possessions, to be *rich* also in

^a 1 Tim. vi. 5.

^b 1 Tim. vi. 18.

good works. And they who have but little, let them do their diligence to give gladly even of that little ; let them remember that where the ability is less, the honesty of their intention may compensate for the meanness of the offering, which they will find to be ^a *accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

Whatever objections they may make from fears of future want, are in reality founded on no better principle than diffidence, or a distrust of Providence, and might be urged, as we have seen, to conclude more strongly on the other side. However a prudent caution must always be allow'd in the management of our affairs, so that men not only may, but ought to make convenient provision for their families ; yet that dependence and confidence in God, which our religion prescribes, forbids us all that anxious care and

^a 2 Cor. viii. 12.

concern, which would terrify us with the dread of future ills, and teaches us to *cast all* our ^a *care upon* God, as knowing that *he careth* for us. This naturally enlarges our views to the publick benefit. It excludes all that selfish solicitude, which would contract our thoughts to our selves, and make us negligent of others. It teaches us, in one word, to ^b *distribute to the necessities of the saints*, and not doubt of the supply and easement of our own ; considering that ^c *God is not unrighteous*, that he should *forget* our *work and labour of love*, which he has promised to reward, if it proceeds upon true Christian principles, not only with the comforts of the present life, but with the eternal glories of that which is to come, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, &c.

^a 1 Pet. v. 7.^b Rom. xii. 13.^c Heb. vi. 10.